

What is claimed is:

1. A method of inputting characters into a device having a data processor, a memory and a plurality of keys, including the steps of:
  - a. providing, in said memory, a table of key-actuating sequences, each said sequence corresponding to a respective character;
  - b. actuating said keys;
  - c. detecting the sequence of actuation of said keys;
  - d. matching the sequence of actuation of said keys with key-actuating sequences in said table of key-actuating sequences; and
  - e. retrieving the character whose corresponding key-actuating sequence matches the sequence of actuation of said keys,

wherein the lines joining consecutive keys of a key-actuating sequence resemble the shape of the corresponding character.

2. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the direction and path of movement among said consecutive keys of a key-actuating sequence resemble the stroke sequences of the corresponding character.

3. A method according to Claim 1 further including a step of pressing one of said keys to indicate completion of input of a character.

4. A method according to Claim 1 further including a step of pressing one of said keys to switch the mode of operation of said device.

5. A method according to Claim 1 further including a step of pressing one of said keys to clear data in a key sequence buffer.

6. A character input device having a data processor, a memory and a plurality of keys, wherein said memory includes a table of key-actuating sequences, each said sequence corresponding to a respective character; said data processor is adapted to detect the sequence of actuation of said keys, to match the sequence of actuation of said keys with key-actuating sequences in said table of key-actuating sequences, and to retrieve the character whose corresponding key-actuating sequence matches the sequence of actuation of said keys, wherein the lines joining consecutive keys of a key-actuating sequence resemble the shape of the corresponding character.

7. A device according to Claim 6 including up to five keys for inputting characters into said device.

8. A device according to Claim 7 wherein four of said five keys are respectively positioned at a north, east, south and west position.

9. A device according to Claim 8 wherein a fifth of said five keys is operable to indicate the completion of input of a character.
10. A device according to Claim 9 wherein said fifth key is positioned among the other four keys.
- 5 11. A device according to Claim 6 wherein one of said keys is actuatable to change the mode of operation of said device.
12. A device according to Claim 6 wherein one of said keys is actuatable to clear the data in a key sequence buffer.